

Side 13: Hamlet & Ophelia – Get thee to a nunnery

Unable to meet his eyes	OPHELIA	Good my lord, How does your honour for this many a day?
Approaching her; the first 'well' is bitter. The second is pained. On the third, he pulls her to him and kisses her in a rush of anger, frustration and longing. She gives in to the kiss for a moment, then steels herself for the final break, pushes him away and turns away from him.	HAMLET	I humbly thank you; well, well, well.
She is adopting the course here that she knows will drive him entirely away, no longer willing to take part in this obscene experiment of her father's. But it needs to be clear to us that it hurts her like fire to say every damning word.	OPHELIA	My lord, I have remembrances of yours, That I have longed long to re-deliver; I pray you, now receive them.
Coldly, contemptuously	HAMLET	No, not I; I never gave you aught.
Shock, anger. The ultimate betrayal is a denial that it ever happened.	OPHELIA	My honour'd lord, you know right well you did; And, with them, words of so sweet breath composed As made the things more rich: their perfume lost, Take these again; for to the noble mind Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind. There, my lord.
	HAMLET	Ha, ha! are you honest?
	OPHELIA	My lord?
	HAMLET	Are you fair?
	OPHELIA	What means your lordship?
	HAMLET	That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.
Recovering a bit of her old spirit	OPHELIA	Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?
	HAMLET	Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness: this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.
	OPHELIA	Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.
	HAMLET	You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it: I loved you not.
	OPHELIA	I was the more deceived.

Her obvious hurt at that gentles him a bit. Kisses her on "Go thy ways to a nunnery", and the kiss gets deeper and hungrier until Ophelia remembers that her father is watching them, and breaks it off hastily. Hamlet sees the betrayal in her eyes, and asks, "Where's your father?"	HAMLET	Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?
	OPHELIA	At home, my lord.
Furious at the lie	HAMLET	Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.
	OPHELIA	O, help him, you sweet heavens!
	HAMLET	If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go: farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and quickly too. Farewell.
	OPHELIA	O heavenly powers, restore him!
Fury driving him to increasing desperation and cruelty; he finally shoves her away from him on the last line.	HAMLET	I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.
Exit HAMLET, stage left		
	OPHELIA	O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown! The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword; The expectancy and rose of the fair state, The glass of fashion and the mould of form, The observed of all observers, quite, quite down! And I, of ladies most deject and wretched, That suck'd the honey of his music vows, Now see that noble and most sovereign reason, Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh; That unmatched'd form and feature of blown youth Blasted with ecstasy: O, woe is me, To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!